



April 5, 2005

Guilty plea in heroin-trafficking conspiracy

Lonnie C. Gasperini, of Pawtucket, has pleaded guilty to federal heroin-trafficking charges, admitting that he sold heroin to an undercover Providence Police detective on several occasions last year.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Gasperini entered on March 31 before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi in U.S. District Court, Providence. Gasperini, 25, of 70 Bloomingdale Avenue, Pawtucket, is detained in federal custody pending sentencing, which is scheduled for June.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein said that, if the case had gone to trial, the government would have proven that, on eight occasions between June 25 and September 27, 2004, Gasperini sold a quantity of heroin to an undercover detective. On each of those occasions, the detective arranged for the sale by calling a pager or cell phone and Gasperini, either alone or with another individual, then met the detective at a prearranged location in Providence for the transaction.

Gasperini sold quantities of heroin ranging from one to nine grams, for prices ranging from \$150 to \$1,200. One of the sales, on August 24, took place on University Avenue, near School One.

Gasperini pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute heroin, seven counts of distributing heroin, and one count of distributing heroin within 1,000 feet of a school. The

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maximum penalties are: conspiracy to distribute heroin and distributing heroin – 20 years imprisonment and a \$1,000,000 fine; distributing heroin within a school zone – 40 years imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum of one year, and a \$2,000,000 fine.

Heroin-trafficking charges are pending against a codefendant, Dennis Steven Batista, 29, of 89 Ralph Street, Providence.

The **Providence Police Narcotics and Organized Crime Bureau** investigated the case, with assistance from the **Drug Enforcement Administration**. Assistant U.S. Attorney Goldstein is prosecuting the case.

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